

27 SEP 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

FROM:

Chief, G.H.

VIA:

Deputy Director for Operations

SUBJECT:

Rafael OTERO Echeverria

1. On 23 September, Rafael Otero was interviewed by the Washington Post (see attachment) in regard to the Letelier assassination. The article raised accusations of Otero's past associations with the Chilean National Intelligence Directorate (DINA) and the CIA which he denied. Our files reflect the following information regarding Otero:

a.

b.

In 1975, Otero was in contact with Cuban exiles in Miami.

c.

Rafael Otero Echeverria, born in Santiago, Chile, on 9 March 1923, is a careerist in the media field and was assigned to the Chilean Embassy in Washington, D.C. on 28 January 1974, following Government service in Santiago as an elected member of the House (Camara de Diputados) in 1973. He has traveled extensively to the United States (1958-64-68-70), France, Italy, Germany, England and throughout all of Latin America. Otero's media career includes the following positions and associations: Radio playwright at Radio Sudamerica, Del Pacifico and Carrera (1942-44), Editor of the Chilean Rotary Club Review (1944-46), Commentator for the National Network Radio Station "Cooperativa Vitalicia" (1946-48), Secretary of

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the Radio Workers Union (1947-48), Chief of the Program Department of the National Radio Network "Agricultura" (1948-49), Director and Under Secretary of the Journalist Union "Circulo de Periodistas" (1948-50), Journalist at "Revista Ercilla" (1949-61), Professor of Journalism at the University of Chile (1956-58), Columnist and Commentator at "El Debate" and "Mundo Libre" newspapers (1961-63), Chief Editor of Radio Balmaceda (1963-66) and "Radio Minería" (1967-68), owner and Editor of the News and Radio Program Service "Servicios Periodísticos Asociados - SEPA" (1969-74), and Chief Editor of SEPA's Political and Economic Weekly (1970-73). Otero was an elected member of the Santiago Capital Municipality and, in 1973, was elected to the Chilean House of Representatives.

signed

Attachment/as Stated

cc: DDCI

CONCUR:

William W. Hollis

29 SEP 1976

Deputy Director for Operations

Date

DDO/AC [REDACTED] (27 September 1976)

Distribution:

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A 23 THE WASHINGTON POST
Thursday, Sept. 23, 1976

Bomb Victim Threatened For Attacking Chile Junta

Rafael Otero, counselor for public affairs at the Chilean Embassy, said in an interview yesterday that no one from the embassy had been questioned by either the FBI or the District police about the bombing.

Otero said that the Chilean ambassador to the United States, Manuel Trucco, had contacted the State Department to offer "full cooperation" in the investigation. "We're very interested in going on with this investigation because this is the worst thing that could happen to my country at this moment," Otero said.

Otero suggested that Letelier's murder, and those of other Chilean exiles in other countries that preceded it, have come in the fall and were timed to coincide with the opening of the United Nations General Assembly session.

"We are asking to help. It's the first opportunity to find out who is making this attack against the Chilean people," Otero said.

When asked about reports of threats made here and reportedly in Chile against Letelier, Otero referred to the killing of Letelier's Chilean citizenship on Sept. 10 by the current government. "Chilean government doesn't need other means" beyond revoking a person's citizenship.

Otero, a short, stout man, was calm during much of the interview until informed that he was being widely described by Chilean exiles and leftists in Washington as being the representative of the National Directorate of Intelligence (DINA), the most important secret police agency in Chile.

Hearing this, Otero responded with laughter and said that this report was "very funny." Otero denied having any role in DINA. The reports, he said, were a way "for the extreme left to point the finger" at him, and he said he would report the information to the U.S. State Department today since he took it as a threat against him.

BOMB, From A22

Otero also raised and denied reports that he was affiliated with the CIA in Chile. Describing himself as a journalist, Otero said he had published SEPA, an anti-Allende magazine, and that he had been imprisoned 28 times "during Allende."

Otero raised the question as to why the explosion of Letelier's car occurred within 100 feet of the Chilean ambassador's residence at 2305 Massachusetts Ave. NW.

At several points during the interview, Otero repeated his assertion that the Chilean government had not had anything to do with Letelier's murder. "We know we don't have anything to do with this murder," Otero said. "We know... it's the worst thing that can happen."